

DUFF ARMSTRONG (grave)

DRAWER 4 IMPORTANT LAW CASES

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# Abraham Lincoln's Important Cases

## William "Duff" Armstrong's Grave

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection



Petersburg, Illinois  
May 28th, 1956

About two years ago, the undersigned had occasion to visit the Court House in Cass County, Virginia, Illinois on business and while there inquired of the County Clerk as to historical papers in the Court House. He was referred to the office of the Circuit Clerk and Recorder. Upon talking with the Circuit Clerk and Recorder, about historical papers, I learned that the entire file (except the documents missing from the file) were in this office. The file I refer to is the file on the William (Duff) Armstrong case which was one of the more prominent cases in the legal life of Abraham Lincoln. I copied every letter that was in the file and since making the copy have been successful in obtaining photostat copies of some of the missing documents, which were originally part of the file. At the time of perusing the mentioned papers, I read an article as to the death of the Defendant in the case said William (Duff) Armstrong. The article was from a newspaper (name of the newspaper not mentioned) which stated that Armstrong died in Ashland Illinois which is the first town East of Virginia, Illinois. Incidentally, the Circuit Clerk & Recorder of Cass County, above mentioned, John Collins, lives in Ashland. I inquired of Mr. Collins if he knew where Armstrong was buried, to which Collins answered that he did not know. He said that he was not buried in Ashland. After leaving Mr. Collins at the above mentioned Court House, it was my desire to endeavor to trace the place of interment of the said Armstrong. I inquired of many people as to where Armstrong may be buried. Unfortunately no one seemed to know positively the place where Armstrong was buried. After several months of inquiry, one J. C. Luther a practicing Attorney in Petersburg helped with the search for the place of interment of Armstrong and he too was unable to learn where Armstrong was interred. Finally, one day when Mr. Luther happened to be in Springfield, Illinois he paid a visit to Mr. Harry Pratt or rather Doctor Pratt the Illinois State Historian and he inquired of Dr. Pratt if he knew where Armstrong was buried. Dr. Pratt told Mr. Luther that he did not know. I then received a letter from Mr. Luther telling me about his call on Doctor Pratt and he, (Luther) as well as myself became more determined than ever to find the grave of Armstrong. In the Summer of 1955 the writer was told by one Lyle Dickey Watkins that he understood that Armstrong was buried in a cemetery at the town of Easton which is about 25 miles North-west of the town of Petersburg. One Sunday the writer went to ~~Petersburg~~ Easton in search of the grave of said Armstrong and inquired as to where Easton the cemeteries were. After locating the Easton Cemetery and finding that Armstrong was not buried there, I went to the Walker's Grove Cemetery and made an extensive search for the grave in question without success. While in this cemetery, a man came into the cemetery of whom I inquired as to whether he knew where Armstrong was buried. The man told me that he had worked in this cemetery for 49 years and never heard of Wm Armstrong. I mentioned who Armstrong was and he said that the name Wm Armstrong was unknown to him. I mentioned the famous trial and he still insisted that he never heard of Armstrong. I then mentioned Lincoln and asked if he knew Lincoln and he said, Oh yes, he was our President one time. I made the mistake of giving up the search at this time on the strength of the man's remarks and after becoming lost and crossing an abandoned bridge which crosses the Sangamon River, and by the way I almost went through the bridge, I returned to Petersburg. Yesterday, May 28th, after talking with the above mentioned Watkins last Saturday night who still insisted that Armstrong was buried in the cemetery at Easton, Luther and the writer went to Easton again in search of the Grave of Armstrong. We inquired in Easton of two gentlemen by the name of Phelps who were brothers as to whether they knew where Armstrong was buried. They referred us to one Ina Samuels who told us that she was sure that Armstrong was buried in the Walker's Grove Cemetery, however, if we were not successful in finding it, might inquire of the Grandson of Wm Armstrong, one Eckert Munsch who lives in Havana, Illinois. We were told too that the Mother of Eckert Munsch was Hannah Armstrong, the daughter of Wm Armstrong and that she married one Joseph Munsch. Luther and the writer finally went to the Walker's Grove Cemetery and after a search located the stone at the head of the grave of Wm Armstrong which is no doubt one placed there by the military, Armstrong having been in the War of the Rebellion and was given a medical discharge by order of President Lincoln. There was placed along side of the head-stone, an American flag, no doubt placed there also by some military organization. The inscription reads as follows; Wm Armstrong - Co C - 85th, Ill. Vol. Inf.

Thus ends the record so far as the search for the grave of Armstrong is concerned.

George L. Driss.





The American People

in the World - 1911

by J. M. G. J. J. J.  
New York, N. Y. 1911.





Prof. G. W. G. G. G.  
There is William G. G.  
G. G. G. G. G.  
G. G. G. G. G.



## Where Is Duff Armstrong Buried?

George A. Selpp of Minneapolis, Minn., who is a Lincoln scholar, visited Beardstown today to get some information about the re-enactment of the Duff Armstrong trial May 5 and 6 at the Beardstown High school auditorium.

He plans to be here to see the trial and asked, "Do you know where Duff Armstrong is buried?"

Selpp said he was accustomed to receiving a negative reply although William (Duff) Armstrong's life was at stake in the trial since made famous by Lincoln's defense of his friend.

Mr. Selpp was curious enough to make an investigation and says that Duff Armstrong is buried in a cemetery at Easton, Ill. He visited the cemetery and saw the grave.

Selpp is a representative of the American Bindery and Supply Co. of Minneapolis, Minn., and reconditions county records. Having worked on records at many courthouses in this area, he became interested in Lincoln history and research.

*The Illinois Star*

*Beardstown, Ill*

*4/22/53*

*grave of Duff Armstrong*

326-E

THE **CURTIS HOTEL**  
AND MOTOR LODGE

Minneapolis Minnesota 55404

August 22nd, 1969

Mr. R. Gerald McMurtry  
910 West Ruidisill Boulevard  
Fort Wayne, Indiana - 46807

Dear Mr. McMurtry:

A couple of days ago I wrote to you and enclosed something which I thought might be of interest to you. Today, I write again, having found something which I also believe could be of interest to you. I don't know whether or not you have caught up with me as yet, however, when I dig into something of an historical nature, I always endeavor to follow through to a conclusion. Such is the case with the attached sheet which is self explanatory.

You will note please, as you read the attached sheet that one J. C. Luther, an attorney practicing in Petersburg, Illinois inquired of the now deceased Dr. Harry Pratt as to where William "Duff" Armstrong was buried. The good doctor Pratt could not give Luther any information. Sometime later, I had a talk with Dr. Pratt and asked him if he knew where Armstrong was buried and I got the same "I don't know" from Dr. Pratt. When Dr. Pratt told me this, I, in a joking way, said, what kind of a State Historian are you? I mentioned the fact that the Armstrong trial was one of Lincoln's most famous cases "The Almanac Trial" and I was not satisfied so, I then set out on a one-man expedition to find the grave of Armstrong which of course is explained in the attached.

Of course, being somewhat of a stinker and never having taken Dale Carnegie's course in How to Make Friends and Influence People, I, by the same token, meet people, ask so many questions that instead of influencing them, I more or less irritate them. I dig in too deep at times, however, most of the time I get answers. To me, History is not History unless it is well documented. Really, however, I do have a lot of fun and most of the time I do get results. I am the one who got into the hair of the Board of Supervisors in Petersburg, Menard County, after I had been up to Sand Ridge where Ann Rutledge was originally interred and the cemetery looked like a jungle along the Amazon River. Well, I finally got the board to add a bit to the tax-roll for cleaning up the burial grounds in Menard County and you can now go to these grave yards and really see the cleared ground and see the grave stones and monuments. I understand that several counties have followed suit since.

I enclose too, a copy of the newspaper article which is self explanatory. I send all these things to you believing perhaps they may be something which you may not have. Oh, there's more that I have gathered through the years which I'll send to you when I can get around to it.

In the meantime, I hope I haven't bored you. Best wishes and  
regards

Cordially

*George A. Seipp*  
George A. Seipp



326-E  
THE **CURTIS HOTEL**  
AND MOTOR LODGE

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404

September 18th, 1969

*ack*  
*9/22/69*

Mr. R. Gerald McMurtry  
910 West Rudisill Boulevard  
Fort Wayne, Indiana - 46807

Dear Mr. McMurtry:

On August 22nd, I wrote to you and sent a sheet telling about my finding the grave of William (Duff) Armstrong, the defendant in Lincoln's famous Almanac Case. At the time of discovery of the grave of Armstrong, I took some pictures, however, I did not send them to you at the time I wrote to you in August. Enclosed herewith are three pictures of Armstrong's grave. You will please note that on the one picture, I have put an arrow at the bottom of the picture pointing to Armstrong's grave stone. It is the 4th stone from the left.

As mentioned in my discovery sheet, there are two cemeteries in Easton, Illinois and they are the Easton Cemetery and the Walker's Grove Cemetery. Armstrong is buried, or rather was, buried in the Walker's Grove Cemetery. I thought you might like to have this discovery complete which you now have, inasmuch as you have the pictures as well as my sheet telling of the discovery.

As you no doubt know, Armstrong was given a medical discharge from the Army signed by Abraham Lincoln. You will note please, that on Armstrong's grave the stone is of Military Type and at the time I took the photographs, an American Flag was along side the stone, no doubt having been placed there by some Military Organization.

Cordially  
*George A. Seipp*  
George A. Seipp.



SEP 69



DUFF ARMSTRONG  
GRAVE

EASTON, ILL.

WALKER'S GROVE  
CEMETERY



SEP 69



SEP 69

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